

**Statement of Rep. Chris Smith, Chairman
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations
on H.R. 2601, Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 2006-2007**

May 26, 2005

Today we are meeting to authorize funding for the administration of foreign affairs, international organizations, international commissions, and related appropriations, and to authorize appropriations for refugee affairs for fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

This legislation, commonly known as the State Department authorization bill, funds the all-important framework by which the United States carries out its foreign aid and foreign policy programs, as well as authorizes U.S. contributions to the United Nations, NATO, the OSCE, and other vital international organizations.

This Subcommittee has conducted numerous hearings in preparation for consideration of this legislation, including hearings on management initiatives of the State Department, an examination of Embassy and border security issues, reform of United Nations peacekeeping, and reform of the Commission on Human Rights and United Nations other human rights bodies.

HR 2061 authorizes \$9.33 billion for the State Department and \$652 million for international broadcasting activities, for a total of \$9.985 billion, an increase of 12.4% over FY 05.

I have been pleased to collaborate closely with my good friend and colleague, Mr. Payne, and other Members of this subcommittee from both sides of the aisle on HR 2601. Very briefly, since the scope of this bill is so large, let me mention a few important areas that this bill addresses.

First, I have always maintained that "personnel is policy." How we treat the men and women of the Foreign Service who work at our Embassies overseas, many under dangerous and difficult conditions, makes a real difference in how the United States is perceived abroad. HR 2601 properly addresses many of their concerns by increasing the ceiling on differential pay for hardship and danger. It begins to close the 16 percent gap between the base pay of officers stationed in Washington and those stationed overseas created by years of DC locality pay increases. The bill also authorizes increased funds for the Rangel fellows program, a program to train and attract more minorities to the ranks of our diplomatic corps, and continues the annual report on minority recruiting efforts at State. Finally, the 6.5% increase in the Diplomatic and Consular Programs account will fund over 150 new staffing positions for increased needs in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Sudan, as well as enable increased language training and staffing for the Office of Stabilization and Reconstruction.

Second, HR 2601 supports the belief of many Americans that the cornerstone of our foreign policy should be the promotion of American values, that is, the protection and

advancement of fundamental human rights of people around the world. This bill authorizes many important human rights initiatives – increased funding for the Office of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; strengthening of U.S. support for democracy and stabilization in Haiti; creation of programs to fight against anti-semitism and protect religious freedom in OSCE countries; permanent authorization for Radio Free Asia; and scholarships for outstanding individuals from the southern Sudan region to study in the United States. One of the most vulnerable people groups in the world are refugees, and this bill contains strong funding for refugee programs to protect those fleeing danger and hunger from Sudan to North Korea and to support their resettlement in the United States and third countries. HR 2601 also more than doubles U.S. contributions for international peacekeeping.

In the vital area of public diplomacy, HR 2601 includes a 10.2% increase for international broadcasting, \$429 million for Education and Cultural Exchanges, a 17% increase, and \$334 million for public diplomacy programs (a 5% increase).

Finally, this bill also strengthens America's hand against terrorism both at our Embassies overseas and at home. In August 1998 the world was shaken by the terrorist bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Among the results of those despicable acts was the appointment of Accountability Review Boards for each incident, chaired by Admiral William Crowe. Admiral Crowe testified before this subcommittee in 1999, and confirmed the finding of the Crowe report that over 85 percent of all U.S. diplomatic overseas facilities did not meet the security standards established as a result of the 1985 Inman report findings.

As a result of that hearing and the inadequate levels of funding identified for capital improvements and worldwide security, Congress responded with a major new funding package. I was the prime sponsor of HR 3427, the Admiral James W. Nance and Meg Donovan Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001 (The Embassy Security Act), which among other things, authorized \$900 million per year for five years for Embassy Security, Construction and Maintenance.

Since that time, 15 major capital projects have been completed, including new embassy and consulate compounds, as well as USAID annex buildings, and another 39 projects are under construction or design.

Security initiatives in HR 2601 include \$1.5 billion for security-related construction of U.S. Embassies, \$690 million to increase security for diplomatic personnel, and \$930 million for border security programs, increases of 1.5%, 5.4% and 7.6% respectively. These requests include funding for 55 additional diplomatic security personnel positions and 55 new consular positions. Under the Capital Security Construction program, eight new embassy compounds and four USAID annexes would be funded.

In conclusion, I urge the committee's support for HR 2601. This bill gives our diplomatic service the resources it needs in this post 9-11 environment to promote U.S. interests and values abroad and to protect American citizens at home.